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Tuesday, 13 April 2004, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Pleuger	(Germany)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Benin	Mr. Adechi
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	Chile	Mr. Maquieira
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Spain	Ms. Menéndez
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Thomson
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

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04-30812 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Albania, Ireland, Japan, and Serbia and Montenegro, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mrs. Ninčič (Serbia and Montenegro) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Guéhenno to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. I now call on Mr. Guéhenno.

Mr. Guéhenno (*spoke in French*): My briefing to the Council this morning will focus on the widespread violence that racked Kosovo in March, the responses to that violence and the implications of those events.

As the Council is aware, the violence appears to have been directly sparked by a series of events in the days preceding the clashes, which raised the level of tension between the Kosovo Albanians and the Kosovo Serbs. In particular, the shooting of a Kosovo Serb youth on 15 March in the village of Caglavica, near Pristina, and the death by drowning of two Albanian children in the Ibar River on 16 March — the body of a third Albanian child believed also to have drowned has yet to be found and the circumstances of the drowning have not been established — were a catalyst for the violent acts that ensued. Inflammatory and often biased media reporting on both incidents contributed to raising tensions.

The demonstrations that followed the incidents that I have just referred to, although apparently spontaneous at the outset, were quickly taken over by organized elements with an interest in driving the Kosovo Serbs from Kosovo and threatening the international presence in Kosovo. The results of these two days of violence in Kosovo speak for themselves: 19 persons died; 954 civilians were injured in the course of the clashes and rioting that occurred in Kosovo; 65 police officers of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), 58 Kosovo Police Service Officers and 61 KFOR personnel were injured; approximately 730 houses, nearly all of which belonged to Kosovo minorities — basically Serbian — were burned or damaged; more than 150 vehicles, including 100 UNMIK vehicles, were destroyed or severely damaged; KFOR itself had one armoured personnel carrier and three other vehicles destroyed.

The situation throughout Kosovo is currently quiet, though it remains tense. The potential for further violence there continues and sporadic attacks continue to occur, including attacks against international staff and the Kosovo police presence. The worst of those occurred on 23 March, when a Ghanaian UNMIK police officer and an Albanian colleague of the Kosovo Police Service were killed when a group of Kosovo Albanian uniformed men fired on their police patrol vehicle. Seven individuals have been subsequently detained by UNMIK following that attack. In a separate attack, in Mitrovica on 24 March, a Kosovo Serb threw a grenade at a KFOR checkpoint and slightly injured two KFOR soldiers. That individual

was subsequently arrested by other Kosovo Serbs and handed over to UNMIK Police.

(*spoke in English*)

The onslaught led by Kosovo Albanian extremists against Kosovo Serbs, Roma and Ashkali communities was an organized, widespread and targeted campaign. Attacks on Kosovo Serbs occurred throughout Kosovo, in larger cities such as Pristina and Gnjilane, as well as in small villages such as Belo Polje in the Pec region, where groups of Kosovo Serbs had recently returned and had planned to rebuild their lives in Kosovo. Properties were demolished, public facilities such as schools and health clinics were destroyed, communities were surrounded and threatened and residents were forced to leave their homes. The inhabitants of entire villages had to be evacuated and, following their departure, their homes were burned to the ground. For instance, in Vucitrn, in the southern Mitrovica region, the Ashkali neighbourhood in which Kosovo's returns process was officially launched, was entirely burned, displacing some 300 individuals who had returned to Kosovo over the past two years. Similarly, a Kosovo Serb village Svinjare, also in the southern Mitrovica region, was completely destroyed.

Perhaps most disturbing and reprehensible, mobs looted, burned and damaged or destroyed 36 Serbian Orthodox churches, monasteries and other religious and cultural sites. Of these sites, 30 are Orthodox churches, two are Orthodox monasteries, one is the Episcopal residence of the Serbian Orthodox bishop, one is an Orthodox theological school and one is an Orthodox Serbian cemetery. The places of worship that were attacked date as far back as the fourteenth century. Two of these have been listed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as major sites of universal significance and a third is listed as a site of regional significance.

The attacks were therefore attacks not simply against places of worship, but against Kosovo's cultural heritage, Kosovo's common collective memory, of which the Serb Orthodox church — as we can see from the exhibition now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art — is an important part. It was an attack against our own collective heritage and many of these sites had remained untouched for centuries through various conflicts. UNMIK is working on establishing assessment teams, led by international heritage experts appointed by UNESCO and the Council of Europe and comprising both Serb Orthodox experts and officials of the Ministry of Culture of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG). Equally regrettable was the retaliatory burning of mosques by Serb extremists in Belgrade and in other parts of Serbia.

The violence has completely reversed the returns process, which prior to the recent events had shown signs of limited but encouraging progress. The total number of persons displaced as a result of the wave of violence is 4,100 people, which is more than the total number of returns for 2003. UNMIK has responded to the crisis and, together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, has moved to ensure the urgent distribution of humanitarian assistance and to gradually stabilize the conditions of the displaced. The United Nations country team assumed the lead in managing and coordinating the humanitarian response to the current crisis. The priority now is to assist those of them who are prepared to return.

The initial response by the leadership of Kosovo's Provisional Institutions was ambivalent. While Prime Minister Rexhepi should be commended personally for his public pronouncements and actions and his calls for an end to the violence, the Kosovo Government issued a statement which focused on the drowning of the Kosovo Albanian children and assumed it was caused by Serbs and was a result of inter-ethnic hatred. As mentioned earlier, this claim was unsubstantiated at that time and still is. Others within the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, including Government ministers and municipal assembly presidents, initially condoned or justified the violence. A statement issued by the Assembly focused on parallel structures rather than on the evolving violence. With regard to non-governmental actors, Kosovo Albanian civil society generally failed to take a responsible stand against the ethnic violence. Moreover, there were reports of cases in which members of veteran groups of the Kosovo Liberation Army participated in the violence.

Only following the strong reaction and pressure by the international community did the leadership of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government come to realize that attempting to justify the violence was unacceptable. While representatives of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government did move to condemn the violence, their statements largely failed to

expressly condemn the attacks on the Kosovo Serb community. Subsequently, representatives of the three main Kosovo Albanian parties, along with representatives of the Turkish, Bosniac, Egyptian and Ashkali communities, signed an open letter to the people of Kosovo condemning the violence and calling for mutual respect among all of Kosovo's communities. The PISG have also committed funds and logistic support for the reconstruction effort, including for the rebuilding of destroyed or damaged religious buildings or monuments.

It should be noted that, during and immediately after the violence, the authorities in Belgrade played a constructive role in collective efforts to stem the violence and stamp out any extremist reaction. We welcome in particular the fact that Belgrade has regretted the burning of the mosques and has pledged to rebuild them.

The steps taken by the leaders of Kosovo's Provisional Institutions are commendable and necessary and should be supported, although they came late and only under outside pressure, but they are not enough. What is clearly needed is for Kosovo's leaders to identify those officials — at both the local and the central levels — who may have provided active backing or passive support to the extremists and who may have used these events to further promote intolerance in Kosovo. Kosovo's leaders must leave no doubt of their wholehearted commitment to tackling and confronting extremism and extremist positions, including within their own ranks, and to holding those politicians responsible and to disciplining those civil servants who may have played an instrumental role in fomenting or participating in the violence.

As the events were unfolding, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Holkeri, immediately moved on a number of fronts in an effort to stem the spread of violence. On the political front, in close coordination with the Commander of KFOR, he convened Kosovo's leaders and asked that, as a first step, they call for an immediate cessation of the violence. To reinforce this message publicly, Mr. Holkeri made a number of statements in the Kosovo and international media calling for calm. Consultations with UNMIK's partners and with Member States' liaison offices on the ground were held throughout the crisis. On the operational front, UNMIK and KFOR established a senior crisis team to coordinate policy and security actions in response to the crisis, which focused on re-establishing a safe and secure environment, immediately launching efforts to apprehend and investigate those involved in the violent actions and to ensure a rapid return to stability and normalcy.

Let me take this opportunity to thank the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for the speed and determination with which it responded to the crisis and for the additional troops that were provided on short notice as part of the collective effort to re-establish safe and secure conditions for Kosovo's population and the international presence there. I also welcome NATO's intention to retain the additional troops in Kosovo.

UNMIK has launched an investigation as well as an assessment of the violence and the extent to which it was organized. A task force and incident room coordinates the investigative efforts and works in close coordination with the criminal division of UNMIK's Department of Justice. So far, investigations have resulted in 183 arrests in connection with the violence. International prosecutors are currently working on 42 cases and an additional 90 are being handled by the local judiciary. However, given the scale of the violence, it is clear that additional investigative capacity will be needed in order for law enforcement authorities to be able to fully, vigorously and effectively pursue these investigations. To this end, UNMIK has asked for 100 additional police investigators and I would take this opportunity to urge those Member States which have been contacted with this request for a speedy and positive reply and to thank those that have done so already.

Although it is early to make a comprehensive assessment of the role of the Kosovo Police Service, it should be noted that many officers performed courageously and professionally in extremely difficult conditions. While the performance of those officers should therefore be commended, there are also reports that some may have taken no action to prevent the violence or, worse still, may have participated in it. All these reports will be thoroughly investigated and necessary measures taken against any officers who did not behave according to professional standards.

The brutality and breadth of these events have indicated to all of us that Kosovo still has a long way to go on the path to multi-ethnicity. The violence represents a huge setback for the stabilization and

normalization of Kosovo's security and political environment and for the efforts by UNMIK and the international community in Kosovo to continue to promote reconciliation. The events have also demonstrated the need for a genuine commitment of the leadership and of the people of Kosovo not only in words, but also in deeds, to the standards of a truly democratic and tolerant society.

What is now required is that the standards implementation process be put back on track. Mr. Holkeri, together with Prime Minister Rexhepi, has gone ahead with the launch of the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan in order to move the process forward and not to lose momentum. The Plan contains key priority actions in the areas of returns and freedom of movement in response to the violent events in March. Further review and revision of the Plan, with additional emphasis on security and the rule of law, minority rights and protection and returns, and on decentralization, may be necessary in the wake of the violence.

Those who seek to undermine Kosovo's progress through violence must know that violence will not be rewarded and that the international community remains determined and committed to move Kosovo forward. In this regard, it is important that the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade, which is currently on hold, resume as soon as possible.

Steps are under way within UNMIK to learn from what has occurred and to take necessary corrective measures. A crisis management review body to evaluate and assess UNMIK's response has been set up. UNMIK is also engaged in efforts at all levels to establish a basis of confidence for Kosovo Serbs and to foster reconciliation among Kosovo's communities. This is clearly an extremely difficult challenge, and it cannot be accomplished without the full commitment of Kosovo's leaders and institutions.

The events have shown us that the international community's determination to ensure that Kosovo progresses on the path of coexistence and then reconciliation among communities is, on its own, not sufficient. What is required now is concrete action by Kosovo's leaders and its people to address the root causes of the ethnically motivated violence that continues to plague Kosovo and to implement measures that ensure that that violence will not be repeated. Indeed, beyond the immediate measures that are being taken to address the consequences of the violent events and take necessary corrective measures, there needs to be a collective effort to address their causes.

Kosovo's leaders bear a responsibility in this regard, and they will be judged on how they do so. They are therefore called upon once again to exercise true leadership and responsible government and to marginalize and hold politically accountable those among them who may have condoned or supported the violence. The message they are called on to convey to Kosovo's representatives and its population is simple and clear: there can be no peaceful and prosperous future for Kosovo without respect for the diversity of its people — violence will not be rewarded.

Mr. Thomson (United Kingdom): We are grateful to Jean-Marie Guéhenno for a trenchant presentation, with which the Council will find me substantially agreeing.

The Irish Presidency of the European Union will be making a statement later in this debate with which the United Kingdom fully associates itself, but I would nevertheless like to make a number of points.

As we have just heard, we have just witnessed the most serious outbreak of inter-ethnic violence in Kosovo since 1999. It has, as Mr. Guéhenno told us, severely damaged Kosovo's reputation, and it shows there is a long way to go to build tolerance. With the initial crisis response over, analysis of the situation points to the cause being major problems not only with underlying ethnic tension, but also in the international community's relationship with Kosovo.

It is clear that we need to learn the lessons of 17 to 20 March. We should not shirk from asking ourselves the hard questions, nor from owning up to mistakes. The only way to prevent that violence happening again is for the international community to undertake a robust lessons-learned exercise, accept the responsibility and act on the recommendations. United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) need to continue their own speedy assessment of what went wrong. But we should not jump to conclusions or rush to change the underlying policy of the standards review mechanism that this Council endorsed last December.

While the violence of last month was, as Mr. Guéhenno has just said, a huge setback, the United Kingdom believes that the international community's

goal of a multi-ethnic, democratic Kosovo is still possible. We congratulate KFOR and UNMIK for restoring calm, and we appreciate the efforts made by Kosovo Albanian leaders to promote tolerance, especially the open letter of 2 April. We welcome their commitments to rebuilding a multi-ethnic Kosovo, and we look forward to seeing those commitment fulfilled.

The recent violence has set the standards process back and demonstrates the need for renewed engagement on the part of the international community, but it has not killed the prospects. In tackling the underlying issues to secure real progress in Kosovo, there are several key challenges for UNMIK, for KFOR and the wider international community. We see the need for the following steps, among others.

First is the need to suppress and deter violence. NATO and UNMIK police need to ensure that the Serb community feels safe to return to their homes, and they need to consider what measures need can be taken to ensure continuing security. A key element, we believe, is the need to tackle extremists with political links.

Secondly, as Mr. Guéhenno has reminded us, we need a better public information strategy, led by the United Nations, to publicize the standards review mechanism and to stop rumours before they get out of hand. We need to help create a responsible media. Extremists should not be allowed to think that violence will force the international community's hand or bring forward a discussion of Kosovo's status.

Thirdly, we need to reassure the Kosovo Serbs in order to ensure that progress made since 1999 is not reversed. The international community needs to take quick decisions on humanitarian aid and reconstruction for those Kosovo Serbs who have been displaced or had their houses destroyed. This is critical for the region's perception of whether the international community is really committed to multi-ethnicity or not. The local Kosovo government have indicated their intention to fund this work, and that is welcome. But the United Nations needs to make sure that the resources, both financial and labour, are there, and to speed up the process.

At the same time, measures need to be put in place to ensure that the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan, issued on 31 March, is reinforced to respect minority rights and their role in Kosovo's future and its institutions. We should also be thinking about effective local government, effectively devolving power to local institutions and giving the Kosovo Serbs a greater stake in running their own affairs, as well as a vision of a future they want to be part of.

The important thing, the United Kingdom believes, is to demonstrate that we are committed to the principle of devolution, which will need to be worked out with the parties on the ground. We need to address ourselves carefully to Belgrade. Their statement did contribute to the underlying tension within the Albanian community in Kosovo, who still fear that the Serb army will return, despite the international presence there. Also, as Mr. Guéhenno has reminded us, the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina must resume as soon as possible.

UNMIK needs to build partnerships with the local Provisional Institutions of Self-Government leaders. There must be a dialogue on how the Provisional Institutions can be made more effective and can work better with UNMIK. We also need to enhance local responsibility while not relinquishing reserved powers from Council resolution 1244 (1999). It is clear that local leaders need to take more responsibility, while not being rewarded for violence.

If Kosovo is to become a real democracy, its leaders need to learn how to govern. We should consider giving them a greater role in issues such as energy, the economy and justice. In return, Kosovo politicians need to make it clear that they buy into the process. Kosovo Albanians must recognize that further violence and unrest will set back the review process. The Provisional Institutions are going to need to demonstrate considerable progress if they are to achieve a positive assessment at the mid-2005 review. We believe it is the responsibility of all parties in the region, including the Provisional Institutions and UNMIK, to work towards a multi-ethnic Kosovo. The United Kingdom believes that no party in Kosovo or the region should be allowed to profit or to advance a political agenda through violent measures.

We also need to address ourselves to the economic state of affairs in Kosovo. The majority of demonstrators were youngsters under 20 years old. Our mission in Pristina spoke to some young Albanians who said that their prime motivation for violence was having no future in Kosovo due to the lack of jobs and the economic situation. These issues, in particular the ongoing problems with privatization, need to be addressed urgently. The international financial

institutions should also be fully engaged. At the same time, UNMIK needs to build confidence. Early movement against those identified by the international task force on corruption would send strong signals of intent.

We should ask ourselves: what do we here in the Council need to do? My delegation believes that there ought to be an early presidential statement, and that it ought to say that the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan is a step forward and should call on all parties to actively implement the standards. Anything less would be a failure.

In conclusion, we believe that the standards review policy framework remains the best approach to building a multi-ethnic and democratic Kosovo. We should not respond to violence by retreating from this. A premature debate on status would only reward extremists and could make matters worse in the region. The recent violence demonstrates how important it is for all parties to work towards real and lasting implementation of the standards, especially on the rule of law and rights of minorities, among others. Therefore, we very much welcome the publication of the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan. It is a key step forward.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I should like to thank Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his excellent briefing on the situation in Kosovo.

The briefing he just delivered described the grave inter-ethnic confrontation and violence that shook Kosovo in March and from which United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) members themselves suffered. It revealed the extreme precariousness of the situation in a battered country that has not yet been able to overcome the aftermath of a war ruthlessly undertaken by two communities.

Algeria, which along with other members of the Security Council condemned those acts of violence, insists on the need to show restraint and a sense of responsibility and to pursue and prosecute those who were responsible for those atrocities and crimes. The Kosovar leaders must learn from the disintegration of the situation that took place in March and take the necessary measures to prevent such a disintegration from reoccurring. Indeed, the serious developments in March stress the need to continue and strengthen the ongoing political process in Kosovo and the launching of the Standards Implementation Plan for Kosovo.

In this regard, that Plan is a step in the right direction, even if it is regrettable that all communities in Kosovo were not able to participate in its drafting. That achievement is a timely reinforcement of the policy of "standards before status" and gives new life to the process of implementing Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) that eventually should lead to consideration of the basic question of the future status of Kosovo.

The Implementation Plan, as it is the outcome of dialogue and close cooperation between UNMIK and the Provisional Institutions of Kosovo, establishes guidelines and actions that Kosovo must undertake within the context of a precise timetable to meet the eight standards. Attaining the standards is a considerable challenge that the Kosovars absolutely must meet. It is a difficult endeavour and it requires sustained sacrifices and efforts of all Kosovars.

Likewise, the international community must help Kosovo to meet these goals and support it in this process. Joint efforts and solidarity are indispensable. The building of a stable, prosperous, democratic, tolerant and multi-ethnic Kosovo is — and this point cannot be repeated too often — our common responsibility.

In this respect, my delegation welcomes the fact that the Plan clearly distributes responsibilities for the implementation of the standards and that it clearly defines the tasks that the Provisional Institutions and UNMIK must carry out within the established deadlines. The progress made in spelling out the eight goals will, we are sure, create new political prospects for Kosovo. Indeed, UNMIK and the Provisional Institutions must implement in full the eight standards before proceeding to an overall assessment of progress in mid-2005, an essential stage which will allow the consideration of the future status of Kosovo to begin.

In order to implement those standards fully, Kosovo will need all of the energy and support of its people, just as it must have the conditions necessary for security and calm established. Prosperity, peace, democracy, coexistence among ethnic groups and the multi-ethnicity of Kosovo cannot be established by decree, since it is true that they will be the outcome of an ongoing and painstaking effort of reconciliation among all communities. That clearly means that confidence must gradually be established, that the effects of the past must be overcome and that a final

end must be put to inter-ethnic clashes. There should be a place for everyone in Kosovo, and Kosovars must realize that they have no other alternative than to live together in harmony.

The events of March were a brutal reminder of the urgent need to work to create a multi-ethnic and tolerant society, a goal which must remain the top priority and to which all efforts should aim. Dialogue and trust among all communities will help Kosovo implement standards and speed up the pace of the process that will lead to final status.

If those elements are lacking, it will be difficult to guarantee the full participation of all communities in the institutions, in the administering of political life and in the dismantling of parallel structures in Kosovo, just as it will be difficult to provide for freedom of movement for individuals and the sustainable return, in security and dignity, of displaced persons. Furthermore, distrust and the difficulties encountered in the process of reconciliation will remain an obstacle that will have to be overcome to permit the promotion of dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, the consolidation of the rule of law, the protection of property rights and the strengthening of links among all components of Kosovar society.

The economic revival of Kosovo also requires stability and calm in order to promote domestic and foreign investment, to create jobs and to improve the social situation of Kosovars. Moreover, the development of Kosovo's economy depends on opening up regional markets to the province's products.

The implementation of the "standards before status" policy and the building of a prosperous, democratic, tolerant and multi-ethnic Kosovo should be supported politically and financially by the international community.

Mr. Motoc (Romania): At the outset, I would like to associate myself fully with the statement to be made shortly by Ambassador Ryan of Ireland on behalf of the European Union.

I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his informative briefing on the recent, and very serious, ethnically motivated violence in Kosovo and on the launch of the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan.

Romania has condemned in the strongest terms what happened in Kosovo in the tragic days of 17 to 20 March. Images of people forced out of their homes, assaulted and murdered, their holy sites burned and destroyed, just because they belong to a different ethnicity, do not resonate with rightful aspirations to prosperity or with the higher values of democracy and freedom for the whole of the Balkans, and they certainly do not belong to the Europe of the twenty-first century.

Once again, we urge all inhabitants of Kosovo and their political leaders to start healing the wounds and to think about a future in which such violence is inconceivable.

Romania would like to commend the men and women of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the law and order personnel of the United Nations for putting down the violence, limiting its already serious consequences and bringing to an end the dangerous course that the violence had taken. We also welcome the wise manner in which the Government of Serbia and Montenegro addressed that painful situation.

We support the strong measures that the international presence in Kosovo has taken to restore stability, to enhance the security and the protection of all communities and of their religious, historical and cultural sites, to bring to justice the perpetrators of the organized and targeted violence and to reinforce the rule of law and public order. In the light of the valuable though sad lessons we all have learned recently, we would like those measures to be further pursued — along with other measures, including increasing the prerogatives of local government, which is accountable to the local communities — in order to make lasting stability possible in Kosovo.

In that respect, we urge the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government to commit themselves fully and unconditionally to a democratic, tolerant and multi-ethnic Kosovo, in particular with respect to the protection and promotion of the rights and freedoms of the members of all minority communities.

Romania notes with appreciation that the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan was finally launched in Pristina on 31 March, under the auspices of Special Representative Harri Holkeri and Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi. We consider that the Plan, as a working and guiding document, if genuinely implemented and adequately reviewed in the light of recent events, could maximize Kosovo's progress in achieving the standards.

Romania continues to strongly support the "standards before status" policy that was devised for Kosovo in implementation of Council resolution 1244 (1999). At this stage, we consider that standards are the only sound way towards a stable Kosovo. The international community has solidly reaffirmed its commitment to that policy.

I would like to stress once again that the standards in themselves indisputably constitute values for all inhabitants of Kosovo. Romania believes, as do many other countries in South-East Europe, that the rule of law, tolerance and democracy are not merely abstract virtues but absolute prerequisites for a stable and better life. We would like the population of Kosovo to join us in that belief and to reach out for its place in Europe.

With respect to standards implementation, which we note began five years ago, we see in recent events a powerful reminder of the urgent need for progress. In a very tragic way, the violence has indicated just how much remains to be done in Kosovo to ensure that every person who lives or wishes to return there enjoys exactly the same rights, freedoms and security.

The recent, cold reality check should further focus the efforts and cooperation of all concerned. We are looking especially towards the Provisional Institutions and Kosovo's political leadership, which have a direct and democratically confirmed responsibility to all inhabitants of Kosovo.

In that respect, we also welcome the 2 April open letter by Kosovo's leaders showing their commitment and their understanding of the challenges in rebuilding relations and rebuilding Kosovo. We expect them to put that commitment into practice strongly and in a timely fashion in the course of standards implementation and by taking priority steps to help Kosovo recover from the recent violence.

Last but certainly not least, I would like to reiterate Romania's strong support for the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and KFOR as they continue to carry out their challenging tasks in Kosovo.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): I thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his valuable briefing on the current situation in Kosovo.

Kosovo is a key element for peace and stability in the Balkans. Brazil supports the process of peace and reconciliation foreseen by resolution 1244 (1999) and the "standards before status" policy for Kosovo.

The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR) have performed quite well on the ground. After five years of work, the United Nations presence has been central in the fight against crime, terror and ethnic cleansing.

However, last month the worst outbreaks of violence since the end of the conflict took place in the region, proving that extremism and separatism are still very much alive and that their proponents are anxious to take every opportunity to create further instability. Those responsible for the murderous riots must be brought to justice.

Despite peacekeeping and international police force efforts, the escalation of violence could not be avoided, and it resulted in many casualties. Moreover, in an extremely unfortunate development, KFOR soldiers and UNMIK civilian police themselves became victims of that violence. As a result, it became necessary to deploy new peacekeeping units in order to prevent further clashes. We welcome the deployment of those troops. Their presence has helped to restore calm to Kosovo, although there are still reports of looting and unrest.

The Secretary-General's Special Representative has announced the creation of a body to review the United Nations Mission's response to the recent crisis. We agree that an independent evaluation of the situation can lead to valuable suggestions for improving the effectiveness of the work of the Mission.

We remain aware of the fragility of the situation on the ground. Brutal incidents have unveiled intentions to force a solution to the status question through violence and intimidation. The international community must respond in a clear and unequivocal manner. After all, the Council has already condemned violence, particularly ethnically motivated violence. Armed groups carrying out their own agendas cannot be allowed to jeopardize the long-standing commitment of the United Nations or to derail the reconciliation process. Moreover, it is our mission to avoid the recurrence of the shameful episodes of ethnic cleansing that took place in the past.

The goal of a stable, democratic, tolerant and multi-ethnic Kosovo can be reached only through joint action. Full protection of human rights is essential to reach peace on the basis of international law. Rebuilding confidence and trust among the different ethnic communities goes in tandem with rebuilding churches and homes that were destroyed.

In this regard we welcome the launching of Kosovo's very detailed Standards Implementation Plan, which must be carried out in strict compliance with resolution 1244 (1999). The Plan sets up valuable guidelines and goals in key areas in the effort to bring peace and stability to Kosovo, such as building democratic institutions, holding locally managed elections, enforcing minorities' rights and freedom of movement and strengthening the economy. It sets the re-establishment of the rule of law as its first priority, which, given the recent events, is fundamental. In this connection we see the entering into effect of Kosovo's provisional criminal procedure code and provisional criminal code as positive developments.

Brazil has stressed on many occasions the importance of the cooperation of all parties involved — above all, cooperation between the authorities in Pristina and Belgrade. The success of the Standards Implementation Plan, which points to a truly multi-ethnic society in Kosovo, requires dialogue and the participation of all individuals and groups, including all minorities. Strong commitment to the Provisional Institutions, engagement in the political process and the adoption of economic reforms remain the only hope in the face of the resurgence of conflict.

Mr. Baja (Philippines): We thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for briefing us on the situation in Kosovo and for presenting the Standards Implementation Plan. The Plan comes to us a few weeks after Kosovo was convulsed by the worst outbreak of inter-ethnic violence since the international community stepped in to restore the rule of law five years ago. The quarters for the Philippines contingent were among the structures razed, along with their belongings.

Kosovo is a conflict area where violence can be reasonably expected to be least, considering that it is an area that one might consider as being under state-of-the-art conflict resolution in this building. That is due to the fact that KFOR is there, with its power and prestige. There is the power and prestige of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the United Nations. It is practically and technically under United Nations protection and has the support of the international community. Suddenly, however, those considerations were not sufficient to abort the violence. However, we commend the swift response of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in restoring the rule of law, and we note with satisfaction that steps are being taken to prosecute the perpetrators of last month's violence. In this connection we would like to verify the reports that Kosovo is emerging as a centre of organized crime in the region and possibly as a base of operations for Al Qaeda.

Under the Standards Implementation Plan we expect the establishment of democratic institutions to move forward. It is important to pursue the holding of elections, with the participation of all communities, before the end of the year. Political transformation must keep pace with the fight to restore security. It is crucial to involve as many stakeholders in the plan as possible. Also, an effective communication strategy to demonstrate to the population the benefit of adhering to the Implementation Plan is essential.

We continue to believe that the situation in Kosovo is essentially an ethnic dilemma. The Albanians and their supporters will accept nothing less than independence and the Serbs and their supporters firmly want to remain part of Serbia, lest the Albanians remain reluctant to support rights for the Serb minority and lest the Serb minority not recognize the authority of Kosovo's institutions.

UNMIK's challenge, I think, is how to bridge the divide, how to build the trust necessary to bridge the gulf between the two communities. We went through the history of the situation, and we came across the agenda for coexistence. We were wondering how far the three major actors — Albanians, Serbia and Belgrade — have cooperated in this agenda for coexistence. Also, what is UNMIK's assessment of how far the ethnic groups — not only the leaders — have accepted the strategy of "standards before status"? We appreciate the fact that raising the status issue may radicalize all sides, but it is difficult to see how it can be avoided and wished away for a long time.

The people themselves must be able to own the strategy and the Plan so that no one feels ostracized. The challenge for UNMIK and KFOR and the rest of

the international community is how to instil sufficient confidence and trust among the peoples to overcome the vendetta and the fear resulting from the violence before, during and after the conflict. In that regard, an effective judicial system is crucial.

At the time of the Council's last briefing by Ambassador Holkeri we endorsed his plan and UNMIK's strategy of developing directly with the people their own political constituency for the reforms and the strategy for political and economic stability for Kosovo. We continue to do so.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting to assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the strategy of standards for Kosovo. We also thank Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General, for his briefing on the implementation of the Plan. We commend the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) for their efforts to implement the standards for Kosovo and for their firm commitment to assist Kosovo in the achievement of such fundamental goals for the territory and for the whole region.

Peace in the Balkans is intrinsically dependant on the success of the Plan. Despite the remarkable process achieved in Kosovo since the adoption of resolution 1244 (1999), significant challenges remain. The recent wave of violence is clear testimony of the challenge we face. We deplore the loss of lives resulting from the events of last month, and we applaud the decision to rapidly deploy the international forces to guarantee the security and more stability in the territory.

Lack of security continues to be an issue of grave concern, taking into account the vital importance of this sector in insuring a lasting peace, as indicated by the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan. The different areas of the Kosovo Standards, namely the rule of law, freedom of movement, sustainable returns, community rights, the Kosovo Protection Corps, economic reconstruction and the protection of property rights are interdependent and their implementation is mutually reinforcing. Their implementation, however, must be fully supported by the normal functioning of the Provisional Institutions. This must work in an efficient, transparent and accountable manner to expand their influence at the local level. UNMIK has a long-term commitment to assist in the normal functioning of the Provisional Institutions based on principles of democracy, the rule of law and universal standards of human rights, including women's rights and freedom from inter-ethnic discrimination. The rule of law remains a key important goal to the peace process in Kosovo. This implies the effective functioning of the police and the judicial system and ensuring that their impartiality functions with respect for human rights.

The establishment of a multi-ethnic Kosovo Police Service and a justice sector, with the capacity to exercise their responsibilities effectively and impartially, are fundamental benchmarks to be met as soon as possible, as are equality and justice for all and the end of impunity for violators. In that regard, it is important to establish a multi-ethnic Kosovo Police Service and address decisively the issue of ethnically-motivated crimes. The steps detailed in the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan constitute an important contribution for the attainment of such goals.

The sustainability of returns and the fulfilment of rights by the different communities require the commitment of all parties involved in this process. Creating a safe environment for the return of refugees and displaced persons must, therefore, be a priority and the guarantee that the objective set by the international community for Kosovo must become a reality. The political leaders at all levels and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government must engage in a systematic effort to build inter-ethnic tolerance to promote reconciliation and to ensure freedom of movement for all citizens of Kosovo. It is absolutely necessary to guarantee conditions for the sustainable return of refugees and displaced persons and for the well-being of the entire population of Kosovo through the creation of jobs and economic development of the region.

My delegation, therefore, calls upon all the parties to develop and intensify a constructive dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina in order to achieve concrete and tangible results aimed at overcoming the great challenges faced by Kosovo, thus allowing each inhabitant of Kosovo conditions for living in a homeland in peace and dignity.

In conclusion, we would like to urge all concerned in Kosovo and in the region to cooperate in a constructive manner with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the full implementation of

the standards-for-Kosovo strategy in order to achieve stability, prosperity and a multi-ethnic, multicultural democratic society in Kosovo.

Mr. Adechi (Benin) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank Mr. Guéhenno for the briefing he has just given us on the developments in the situation in Kosovo.

The violence that broke out in March this year show that the situation in the province is so fragile that the slightest incident can lead to an explosion of widespread inter-communal violence. That means that Kosovo continues to experience a deep-seated malaise that must be monitored by all institutions. We wish to commend the prompt response of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK), which has made it possible to stabilize the situation and limit the damage.

We reiterate our condemnation of ethnic cleansing and the deliberate destruction of cultural property, which constitute a serious violation of the heritage of the communities living in Kosovo, as well as of the common heritage of humanity. We believe it is imperative that the perpetrators of those acts be identified and that the most vigorous measures be taken to find them, because impunity will only encourage a relapse into similar acts that would be harmful to peace and security in the province. That is why we welcome the investigations under way and stress the need to conduct them objectively so that they may contribute to calming tensions among all the communities concerned.

In that regard, we welcome the adoption of the standards-before-status policy, which deals in detail with actions to be taken, on the identification of competent frameworks in which to carry them out and on the means and timetables prescribed to implement them. However, following the tragic events of last March, a review of policy measures is also necessary. In view of the recent events in Kosovo, we welcome the fact that firmly reaffirmed in that plan is the guiding goal of the standards-before-status policy: the creation of a multi-ethnic Kosovar society that is inclusive, free from discrimination and within which all communities feel that they are effectively participating in the management of public affairs.

The need for unequivocal commitment by the Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, with a view to achieving that goal has been correctly translated into very significant concrete actions, such as the creation of a reconstruction and rehabilitation fund under the consolidated budget of Kosovo to repair destruction and damage caused by the events and envisaging the adoption of regulatory and legislative measures to protect the right of property and to facilitate the return of displaced persons to the province.

The major challenges that KFOR and UNMIK must face together, as well as the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, remain ethnic hatred and the question of parallel Serb structures in the province. We believe that the decision to integrate the parallel institutions into the new institutions of Kosovo is sound and that the cooperation of Belgrade authorities should be sought so that that can be done without difficulty. We welcome the priority given to restoring the dialogue with Belgrade by establishing working groups on basic issues that have been identified.

We believe it is extremely important that the elections scheduled for next fall take place under optimum conditions of security, fairness and transparency. The decision to gradually hand over responsibility to the Central Electoral Commission to manage the elections is wise because it will contribute to ownership of the electoral process by the communities living in Kosovo. The ability to integrate refugees and displaced persons in the province into the process will, in our view, make it possible to ensure credibility of the elections, which must strengthen the conviction that each community is effectively exercising its right to participate in the management of public affairs in the province.

In conclusion, we welcome the positive role being played by the Kosovo Protection Corps, alongside KFOR, in events and the measures envisaged to strengthen its contribution to stabilizing the situation in the province in the sound interest of all components of Kosovar society.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We, too, are grateful to Mr. Guéhenno for his comprehensive briefing.

The Russian Federation is deeply concerned by developments in Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro. The sudden outbreak of violence in March, caused by extremists in that province, laid bare the deliberate policy of ethnically cleansing the non-Albanian population of Kosovo, particularly the Kosovo Serbs.

Russia has repeatedly warned against the danger of such a development. Nevertheless, this alarming trend, which has gained in urgency in recent years, was, unfortunately, not adequately responded to by the international presences in the province. Today, it has become definitively clear that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) should have been more decisive from the very outset in stopping the extremists among the Kosovo Albanians from acting to establish a mono-ethnic society.

The main reasons for this situation are clear: the failure to implement Security Council resolution 1244 (1999); the desire of a number of participants in the Kosovo settlement to indulge in wishful thinking; and the attempt to inculcate high democratic standards in the province without taking the real situation into account.

The current crisis requires the most serious analysis of events and major adjustments to the future strategy for a settlement. We cannot pretend that nothing serious has happened. Promoting the process of creating standards in Kosovo without addressing the problems that have emerged as a result of the events of 17 to 20 March is unacceptable. We need above all a thorough investigation into the incidents and to prosecute the instigators of the pogroms, as well as all those who aided and abetted them or facilitated through their inaction, particularly since many of these people are well known. It is important to establish tighter control over the activities of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in the province and to provide for the effective collection of illegal weapons, large amounts of which remain in the hands of the extremists.

We believe that, in the light of those events, all the talk about a timetable for the final status of Kosovo is highly inappropriate. Frankly, we were surprised recently to hear statements about the need to accelerate talks on the status of the province, which is being virtually cast as a recipe for normalizing the situation there. We are convinced that, on the contrary, this approach would lead to further complications and actually encourage new pogroms and ethnic cleansing.

We were genuinely puzzled to hear the statement made on 9 April by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, Mr. Holkeri, to the effect that the Security Council had previously endorsed the date for the consideration of the question of the future status of Kosovo. Obviously, this is a distorted interpretation of the contents of the Security Council resolution on the review mechanism for standards implementation in the province, as set forth in the presidential statement of 12 December 2003.

As we have said before, the logic of a Kosovo settlement in no way includes the hasty imposition of the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan, as has been done without prior submission of the Plan to the Security Council, as required in the presidential statement to which I referred. We are convinced that the Plan requires thoroughgoing revision. There is a substantial need to reinforce its provisions in the areas of providing equal security, freedom of movement and the rights and freedoms of ethnic minorities. Efforts must be made to restore direct dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina.

At the same time, it is important to begin joint consideration of options for a long-term normalization of the situation in Kosovo. A key element of such work should be the thorough consideration of the idea of decentralizing the administration of the province in order to provide solutions that take the interests of all Kosovo communities into account and that, through the necessary institutional guarantees, create — in deed and not in words — conditions for their coexistence in a multi-ethnic, democratic society.

Russia is providing assistance to the civilian population of Kosovo that has been driven from its homes, and we are prepared to engage in very close cooperation with our partners in the Contact Group and the Security Council, as well as with the European Union, in order to put a swift end to the tragedy in the Balkans and to move the situation towards the context defined in Security Council decisions. It is most important that joint efforts be made consistently and comprehensively to implement resolution 1244 (1999), which remains the sole legal basis for a Kosovo settlement.

We hope in this regard that the most serious conclusions will be drawn from what has occurred, allowing us to avoid double standards and to focus the attention of the international community on a just settlement of the Kosovo problem, which is so crucial for Europe.

Mr. Duclos (France) (*spoke in French*): My delegation fully associates itself with the statement to be made in due course by the Ambassador of Ireland on

behalf of the European Union. I would just add a few words.

First, the events of March definitely represented a serious blow to the process supported by the international community in Kosovo. We are grateful to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his frank and very useful briefing this morning.

It seems to us that — as the Under-Secretary-General emphasized — it would be helpful to undertake a process of collective soul-searching about what happened during the recent violence. The main lesson is doubtless an understanding that, even today, the role played by extremist forces in Kosovar society remains extremely significant and that we must make a renewed effort to isolate those extremists from the majority population that seeks a democratic Kosovo.

The second lesson unquestionably relates to the attitude to the international presences in Kosovo. In this regard, we agree with Mr. Guéhenno's statement. We welcome the review process to determine how we arrived at this point. I am sure that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Kosovo Force reacted promptly and appropriately during those events, although UNMIK appeared to have been taken by surprise. We might wonder, therefore, whether UNMIK has the kind of dialogue and close relationship with Kosovar society that is necessary to its ability to fulfil its crucial job there in implementing policy.

We also might question the nature of the economic plan for Kosovo because, as was indicated by our British colleague, there is no doubt that the deplorable economic environment in Kosovo contributed to the violence that we observed. But apart from this useful collective soul-searching, what should we do in the coming stages?

First of all, we, like others, think we now need to reassure the Serb minority, see to it that the property that was destroyed can be rebuilt, implement a policy for refugees who want to go back home, give assurances to the Serb community regarding security, and see to it that those responsible for the violence are prosecuted and punished.

Secondly, of course we need to look to the provisional authorities of Kosovo, who must adopt a responsible attitude. We are not against a transfer to the provisional authorities of greater responsibility in a certain number of specific areas, but it must be clear that it is the provisional authorities of Kosovo who are the first ones responsible for restoring a climate conducive to progress in Kosovo. Here, like others, we welcome the open letter of 2 April and hope that the positive commitments that it contains will be backed up by specific action.

Thirdly, should we change our approach to the Standards Implementation Plan? We do not think so. Like others, we are in favour of continuing with the current process. We have taken note here of the Standards Implementation Plan that was submitted by the Special Representative on 31 March. It seems to us to be a useful document and we are prepared to work on it. I am sure that that document needs to highlight, in the current context, a number of points, such as the rights of minorities, human rights and the rule of law. I also think that it is important that this document not give rise to any ambiguity with regard to the meeting scheduled for 2005. As was indicated by the Security Council in its statement of 12 September, only sufficient progress by the Provisional Institutions in implementing standards will make it possible to get the discussion going.

Finally, we are prepared to work on a presidential statement, which seems to us very useful for again stressing a number of messages from the Security Council and the international community in the current circumstances: a message to condemn the violence and a message to express a hope for the future.

Ms. Menéndez (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Naturally, Spain also associates itself with the statement to be made by the Permanent Representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union.

Very important events have taken place in Kosovo in recent weeks — the inter-ethnic violence, from 17 to 20 March, and the publication of the Standards Implementation Plan for Kosovo.

As to the former, Spain unequivocally condemns the ethnic violence that led to loss of life, destruction of property and religious and spiritual heritage of Orthodox Serbs, and the attacks on KFOR and on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). These events must be investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice in order to prevent a recurrence. What has happened is a serious setback in the process of normalization and the fulfilment of the standards for the province of Kosovo.

We believe that authorities of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government should take good note of this and make it their duty to do everything within their power to guarantee the rights of members of all minorities in Kosovo. The perpetrators of these violent acts must be made aware that force is never a means to achieve political goals.

Regarding the Implementation Plan, we repeat our support for the "standards before status" policy, which remains the core of the international community's activity in Kosovo. Accordingly, the publication of the Plan means a step forward in the fulfilment of the standards. But we believe that this should not induce anyone to think that everything is going on as usual, just as before, because the violence of March has done serious damage to the fulfilment of the standards, and therefore to the Plan. Accordingly, we believe that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNMIK should be invited to review and, if necessary, strengthen those aspects of the Plan that have been most seriously hampered by the events of March, especially as regards the return of refugees and freedom of movement.

Finally, we reiterate our support to Mr. Holkeri, UNMIK and KFOR in their efforts to ensure application of resolution 1244 (1999). We believe that the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government need to be reminded of their primary and fundamental responsibility to ensure fulfilment of the provisions of the Implementation Plan.

Mr. Maquieira (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the briefing given us by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno. We have been made aware of the delicate situation of recent weeks in Kosovo. I should like, through him, to convey to Mr. Holkieri, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and all the personnel of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), our support in their efforts to fulfil resolution 1244 (1999).

We have been following the events and violence in Kosovo with great concern. We reiterate that those responsible for those despicable acts must be brought to justice. Those acts have led to deeply regrettable loss of human life, hundreds of people injured and enormous material damage. We must prevent impunity from taking a grip in Kosovo. Let me once again repeat Chile's most vigorous condemnation of these acts.

It is too soon to reach definite conclusions about what has happened. However, we would urge that an assessment process of this crisis continue with a view to learning lessons and making such adjustments as might prevent the recurrence of such deplorable acts. We recognize the efforts made in this regard, both by UNMIK and by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government. What is clear is that if the international community were to hesitate today in its efforts to achieve a democratic, multi-ethnic Kosovo, in keeping with resolution 1244 (1999), the perpetrators will have won.

The Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan presented in March is a key instrument in achieving the standards contained in the document "Standards for Kosovo" published in December of last year in Pristina and endorsed by the Council at that time. The Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan, the legal basis and guidelines for which are contained in the document "Standards for Kosovo", envisages a genuinely multi-ethnic, stable and democratic Kosovo. Everyone must contribute to this undertaking. Cooperation between the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and UNMIK will be fundamental for implementing the Standards Implementation Plan. Belgrade's contribution is also crucial.

The value of the Implementation Plan resides in the set of guidelines that it provides to achieve a quantitative and qualitative assessment of concrete improvements regarding the standards. Future reviews will be a fundamental aspect of this. We look forward with great interest to these results regarding what has been achieved.

We repeat that, without a significant and sustainable return of internally displaced person and refugees despite the recent setbacks, without appropriate freedom of movement, without the disappearance of the parallel institutions and without constructive dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina and between UNMIK and the Kosovo Assembly, the construction of a multi-ethnic and democratic society that can include all the inhabitants of Kosovo, without exceptions, will not be possible.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): We are grateful to you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting today on the situation in Kosovo. I would also like to thank Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his briefing on the latest situation in Kosovo.

Like other Council members, Pakistan has strongly condemned the violence of 17 and 18 March, which claimed at least 19 lives. We condemn not only the loss of life and the injuries, but also the damage to Kosovo's cultural and religious sites during the onslaught. We are happy that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is working with the local authorities in Kosovo to rebuild some of those sites. We commend the efforts of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR) in restoring stability in Kosovo. We appreciate the effective way in which the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Holkeri, helped to defuse this very difficult situation. In that regard, we support Mr. Holkeri's request for additional police investigators and prosecutors for UNMIK. We hope that UNMIK will continue its investigations into the causes of the violence and, in due course, report to the Council on its findings. We also commend all those in Kosovo who have strongly condemned the violence and have called for calm and reconciliation.

Some have described last month's violence as a wakeup call. Pakistan has been one of those few countries that have consistently called for the clarification of the final political status of Kosovo — and perhaps the lone voice in the Council to do so. Let me be clear: violence must not be rewarded. There must be no impunity for those who carried out these acts, whether Albanians or Serbs. Nevertheless, the longer any movement towards status is delayed, the more the delay will continue to feed into the frustrations of one side and the nationalist rhetoric of the other and the more it will perpetuate the cycle of violence. Such violence will keep repeating itself unless and until some solution is found to the thorny issue of status. We will say this again, as we have said before, the key to peace and prosperity lies in clarifying Kosovo's final political status.

Pakistan's position on status is independent of our support for standards. We take note of Mr. Holkeri's recent remark that "the standards are not an obstacle to Kosovo's progress". In our view, they are not meant to be. We agree that the establishment of a multi-ethnic, tolerant, democratic and peaceful society in Kosovo remains a fundamental objective in the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999). We welcome the announcement of the Standards Implementation Plan by Mr. Holkeri in Pristina on 31 March. The Plan identifies policies in each of the eight standards, policies that have to be implemented by certain deadlines, along with assigned responsibilities. The Plan is to be implemented by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo, through the support and assistance of UNMIK and the international community.

However, Pakistan is concerned that not every community has participated in the preparation of the Implementation Plan. We hope that, later, this will not be put forward as an obstacle in the implementation of the plan. We are also concerned that the policy on two of the most important standards — relating to returns and to freedom of movement — has not as yet been finalized. These are crucial areas, on which we hope early progress can be achieved. Also crucial is the need to revive the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade, which, as Mr. Guéhenno said, is currently on hold. Like others, we are still in the process of studying the Implementation Plan. At this point, we wish to offer our initial, though cautious, support for it — but with the following caveats.

First, the lack of support by any community or party must not be allowed to be used as an excuse to delay the achievement of standards or to prevent progress towards the finalization of the status issue in the future. Secondly, in implementing the plan, the bar should not be set so high that most countries represented in the Organization, including those in the European Union, would have difficulty in meeting those standards. Finally, the Plan should remain realistic and achievable. In that regard, we are happy to note Mr. Holkeri's observation that

> "The plan overall is a living document: it will be revised as time goes on. This makes sense, because some policies may not work and we may need new ones".

We understand that the Contact Group on Kosovo is preparing a presidential statement on Kosovo. We look forward to working with other Council members to finalize such a statement. While we support the efforts of the Contact Group and understand the delicacy of the situation, we nevertheless would encourage the Group to consult more widely than they have been with other Council members when preparing such documents. The automatic concurrence of other Council members, who may have their own views on the issues involved, should not be taken for granted.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like first to thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his briefing on the situation in Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro.

The large-scale violent inter-ethnic conflict that took place in Kosovo last month seriously undermines the peace process in Kosovo and the international community's efforts there. Although the situation has eased somewhat, it remains extremely precarious. We deplore the violent acts against Kosovo Serbs and the destruction of religious and cultural facilities described by Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno in his briefing.

We urge the parties concerned to discover the truth about those events as soon as possible and to bring the perpetrators to justice. We hope that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government will adopt further measures to strengthen the rule of law, improve public order, ensure the safety of all ethnic communities, especially minorities, and guarantee the right of return and freedom of movement. We call on the parties concerned also to continue their commitment to ethnic reconciliation in order to create conditions for the establishment of a multi-ethnic society in Kosovo.

We have always maintained that the solution to the Kosovo problem should be based on resolution 1244 (1999) and the principle of "standards before status". That is the common understanding of the entire international community as well. We note that UNMIK has formulated the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan and intends to revise it further. We hope the Plan will help Kosovo achieve substantial progress in the political, economic and social fields.

I stress once again that political dialogue is the only right way to solve the Kosovo problem. Violence will not help to find a solution to the problem and is in no one's interest. We hope that Belgrade and Pristina will resume their dialogue as soon as possible and resolve their differences through patient negotiations.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): I too thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his briefing to the Council this morning. I want to join other Council members in saying that the recent violence in Kosovo was deplorable and should never be repeated. Such violence is a dead end for the people of Kosovo and for the people of the region. I would like to extend once again the condolences of my Government to those who suffered injury, to the families of those who died and to those who lost property. Our hearts go out to the families for what they have suffered.

We are pleased to see that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR) have already arrested nearly 180 suspects in relation to the violence. Those responsible for the killings and destruction must face justice, and the authorities in Kosovo should apprehend those responsible and bring them speedily to trial.

I would also like to commend those who stood up to stop the violence. The quick response by UNMIK and KFOR helped quell the violence, and the brave soldiers, policemen and others involved deserve our thanks. Most of the leaders of Kosovo's Provisional Institutions of Self-Government reacted responsibly by condemning the violence and urging the people of Kosovo to solve their problem peacefully. Prime Minister Rexhepi showed leadership in his calls to stop the violence, as did those leaders in Belgrade who called for calm.

Further destruction to Kosovo's patrimonial sites was prevented by rapid KFOR intervention, including the addition of more than 3,000 reinforcements sent to Kosovo. According to UNMIK, more than 22 churches were nonetheless destroyed and another 11 were damaged due to the initial outbreak of violence. We encourage KFOR, in coordination with UNMIK and the Kosovo Police Service, to ensure protection of Kosovo's cultural and religious sites, and we urge the Provisional Institutions to follow through on promised reconstruction efforts to rebuild damaged churches and homes.

The violence was clearly a setback in Kosovo's development into a society that can become part of Europe. It was also a challenge to the international community. The United States remains fully committed to multi-ethnicity, peace, prosperity and democracy for Kosovo. We will not allow the violence to divert us from holding Kosovo responsible for fulfilling the United Nations standards, which will create a democracy, peaceful multi-ethnic life and the rule of law: the preconditions the international community has set for initiating a process to determine Kosovo's future political status.

We support the review date policy and a comprehensive review of Kosovo's progress on implementing the UNMIK standards in mid-2005, or earlier if progress warrants. Those who believe that violence can be used to further a political agenda should know that the United States and the international community will not pursue a final status decision until Kosovo can ensure a peaceful and secure environment for all its communities. We remain committed to the fulfilment of the standards, which represent the only path for Kosovo towards a process of determining its future political status.

The standards remain the way ahead, but we cannot continue as if nothing had happened. The recent violence made clear that an intensified effort is required in Kosovo. In that regard, we welcome the issuance last month of the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan, which lays out the specific steps that must be taken to implement the standards. The Plan also specifies which steps should be taken as a matter of priority in the light of the recent violence. The Contact Group will be meeting in Pristina later this month to support UNMIK and to assess the situation directly. A stepped-up effort on standards implementation in Kosovo should focus on issues of immediate impact highlighted by the violence, in particular establishing the rule of law and apprehending and prosecuting perpetrators, as well as the rapid rebuilding of private and religious properties that were damaged and destroyed.

On a more general level, it is clear that Kosovo must work doubly hard to ensure security for all communities and must consider the devolution of authority to establish more effective local government.

It is worth recalling the goal set out in the United Nations standards: a Kosovo where all, regardless of ethnic background, race or religion, are free to work and travel without fear, hostility or danger, and in which there is tolerance, justice and peace for everyone. If the people of Kosovo are ready to move forward on the standards, the United States, working with the United Nations, NATO and the European Union, is ready to help Kosovo succeed in building a better future.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Germany.

First, I should like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his very comprehensive briefing.

Secondly, I would like to state that Germany fully subscribes to the statement that the representative of Ireland will make shortly on behalf of the European Union.

Last month, violence forced all parties involved in Kosovo — local political leaders, as well as the international community — to make a sober appraisal of the policies they have been pursuing up until now. Clearly, the lesson to learn is not that we should give up our aim of building a democratic and tolerant Kosovo. On the contrary, the violence highlighted the stark choice between a civilized society and one where extremists influence the people. We must now be clear about what is demanded of all parties in order to realize our goals.

For the political leaders in Kosovo, the most important lesson is that they must leave no doubt about their commitment to protecting minorities and to building a multi-ethnic society. The recent letter of Kosovo Albanian political leaders to the people of Kosovo was an important gesture. But now, words need be followed by deeds.

Political leaders must also be unequivocal about their determination to isolate and punish violent extremists. They must explain the rationale of reconciliation to their constituents and be prepared to pay the political costs. Funding the reconstruction of all the destroyed houses and churches out of the Kosovo consolidated budget may not make the leaders of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government more popular with their constituents, because other high priority tasks must be deferred as a consequence. Nevertheless, all the houses and churches have to be rebuilt.

Sending extremists to prison and purging the parties and governing structures of extremist influence may also cost political leaders some support. Firing those officers of the Kosovo Police Service who failed to protect minorities may also be politically unpopular. But all those steps are essential in order to create a stable society.

One especially important area for improvement is bringing government in Kosovo closer to local communities through devolution of political authority.

Local communities in Kosovo need to have a greater say over institutions such as schools to ensure that government is responsive to local needs. As a by-product of such devolution of government authority, illegal parallel structures can be eliminated. We will continue to promote devolution as a way to create more stable and effective local government in Kosovo, which is also in the interest of minorities.

The international community must also make its own commitment clear. First, we must reaffirm that our commitment to the minority communities of Kosovo is iron-clad: our troops, our international police and elements of our apparatus of civilian administration will stay in Kosovo in adequate numbers until all Kosovars can live in freedom and security. Secondly, we must make it clear that we are acutely sensitive to the difference between lip-service to ideals and the actual fulfilment of standards, and that we will accept only concrete actions and tangible progress. And lastly, we will also have to analyse why, five years after the suffering of the Kosovo Albanian population was stopped, hatred in Kosovo is still so strong, and identify what can be done by the international community to help achieve reconciliation among all communities in Kosovo.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The next speaker is the representative of Serbia and Montenegro, on whom I now call.

Mrs. Ninčić (Serbia and Montenegro): Allow me, Sir, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April and to thank you for convening this meeting on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). I would also like to sincerely thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his briefing.

Efforts to transform the western Balkans into a region of stability and progress suffered a serious setback with the outbreak of orchestrated violence, intimidation and ethnic cleansing that Kosovo Albanian extremists and terrorists committed in Kosovo and Metohija from 17 to 20 March, in the presence of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and KFOR.

According to resolution 1244 (1999), the international security presence is mandated to establish a secure environment where refugees and displaced persons can return home in safety. By the same resolution, the international civil presence is mandated to maintain civil law and order, protect and promote human rights and assure the safe and unimpeded return of all refugees and displaced persons to their homes. Both have failed to fulfil those obligations.

My Government takes note of Mr. Holkeri's announcement that UNMIK is determined to bring to justice all persons whose involvement in the latest violence can be evidenced. We will welcome the commencement of trials against perpetrators of those crimes. There was ample opportunity in the five years of international administration of Kosovo and Metohija to demonstrate that a culture of impunity for ethnically motivated violence would not be tolerated. This may be one of the last opportunities to prevent impunity leading to a mono-ethnic society.

Serbia and Montenegro also appreciates pledges to rebuild devastated homes, churches and villages. Only if those assurances speedily become reality will there be room for assessments that the extremists who caused the violence did not win.

The March violence in Kosovo and Metohija has been widely condemned. However, we feel it necessary to point out that this bloodshed was not an abstract phenomenon requiring only general expressions of censure. My Government expects the next report of the Secretary-General to assess the political background of this pre-planned violence. Disregarding the causes of an organized wave of attacks leaving many civilians dead, hundreds wounded, thousands expelled from destroyed and burning homes and dozens of Orthodox churches and monasteries devastated will not lead to safety, stability and reconciliation.

Since June 1999, the Serb community and other ethnic communities have been exposed to daily attacks and intimidation by extremists among the majority population of Kosovo Albanians. After the tragic events of last month, it is clear that what is at stake in Kosovo and Metohija is not safeguarding the rights of the members of the Serb community, but ensuring that community's very physical survival.

In such circumstances, it is difficult to envisage the smooth and rapid implementation of the concept of a democratic, multi-ethnic and prosperous society advanced in the "Standards for Kosovo" and Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan documents. Those documents quite simply fail to provide sufficient

guarantees for the survival of the Serb population in the province, let alone for returns. The failure to establish such guarantees would signify an end to the possibility of a multi-ethnic Kosovo — in the very presence of the international community, which would share responsibility for that outcome.

Therefore, we need to have real security and reliable institutional guarantees for the Serb and other ethnic communities in Kosovo and Metohija. It is essential that the particularly vulnerable ethnic communities enjoy meaningful autonomy in Kosovo and Metohija in order for them to be able to protect their lives and property, to ensure freedom of movement and employment opportunities and to gradually build possibilities for coexistence with the majority population. Proceeding from that reality, both the Government of Serbia and all relevant political factors in the Republic consider that the survival, return and peaceful life of Serbs can be guaranteed only if they are granted self-government in Kosovo and Metohija in the form of territorial autonomy, which is a long-established mechanism for the protection of the rights of ethnic, cultural and linguistic communities in Europe.

Such a proposal has been developed by the Government of Serbia and will soon be presented to all domestic and international actors. The proposal deals with ways to improve the conditions of the Serb community in Kosovo and Metohija and to enable its members to administer affairs of vital importance to their livelihood. It does not raise or prejudge in any way the issue of the future status of Kosovo and Metohija as envisaged by Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). It is violence and the repeated calls for independence by Kosovo Albanian leaders that seek to prejudge final status.

The Government of Serbia and Montenegro and the Government of Serbia oppose changes of borders in the Balkans, well aware of the consequences these have had over the past decade and of the consequences they may have in the future. Both Governments are looking to a future marked by a process of integration rather than of disintegration.

My Government therefore expects the Security Council to support proposals aimed at providing the non-majority ethnic communities of Kosovo and Metohija with institutional guarantees to ensure their survival, their return, their rights and their cultural and religious heritage. We also believe it is necessary to resume the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue on practical issues. We look forward to evidence of similar commitment from the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government — which has been so consistently elusive in the past.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Ireland. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, the candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey and the countries of the European Free Trade Association Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, declare that they align themselves with this statement.

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his comprehensive briefing.

The European Union is grateful for this opportunity today to consider the situation in Kosovo. The Union has strongly condemned the recent ethnically motivated violence in Kosovo, the loss of life, the damage to property and the destruction of religious and cultural heritage, which is the common property of all Europeans. The Union has also strongly condemned the attacks on the troops of KFOR and the personnel and sites of UNMIK. The European Union calls on all leaders, especially the Kosovo Albanian leadership, to take responsibility for the situation and to ensure that such acts and threats of violence are not repeated. Those responsible for the violence must be brought to justice.

We call on the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government to demonstrate their commitment to a multi-ethnic Kosovo. As an immediate step, we welcome their decision to allocate funds for reconstruction and we urge them to take further responsibility for the urgent reconstruction of damaged property, including places of worship, to ensure the earliest possible return for internally displaced persons. We also stress the need for political leaders in Kosovo to work closely with UNMIK and KFOR to ensure the physical security and the full protection of the rights of members of all communities in Kosovo.

The recent events have been a serious setback for Kosovo and have endangered the progress made in recent years. The European Union reaffirms its strong support for Special Representative of the Secretary-General Harri Holkeri, UNMIK and KFOR in their determined efforts to stabilize the situation and to ensure the implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and the policy of standards-before-status. These remain the foundation of the international community's commitment to Kosovo. The path ahead for Kosovo lies in the implementation of the standards. In this regard, we take note of the presentation on 31 March of the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan as a step forward in the standards process. We reiterate the European Union's commitment to a stable future for a secure, democratic, prosperous and multi-ethnic Kosovo, with its place in Europe.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): Let me say at the outset that Japan would like to express its deepest concern over the violence that erupted last month in Kosovo. To aid us in understanding why this occurred once again, despite all the international efforts that have been made to create stability and bring life there back to normal, we hope that, in his next report, the Secretary-General will provide us with a comprehensive evaluation of the incidents and an assessment of measures taken by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) during the violence, perhaps building upon today's substantial briefing by Mr. Guéhenno.

Japan wishes to make two points about the violence in Kosovo, which, it believes, should be seriously considered by all members of the international community.

First, the most important lesson we learned from the violence is the need for redoubled efforts towards the establishment of a multi-ethnic society; there is no alternative to the implementation of the Kosovo standards in reaching this goal. We express our support for UNMIK and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in the implementation of its standards and appeal to the international community to express its support for the recently publicized Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan.

Secondly, the violence demonstrated the increased need for security in Kosovo. My Government expresses support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General Harri Holkeri, UNMIK and KFOR in their strengthened efforts to stabilize the situation immediately after the violence. At the same time, on the basis of the assessment of the measures taken by UNMIK before the violence, we need to give serious thought to how we can improve the security situation in a sustainable manner. One of the most immediate tasks should be upgrading the Kosovo security organizations, including the training of police officers. Japan has been cooperating with the United Nations Development Programme through the Illicit Small Arms Control Programme and the Trust Fund for Human Security and calls on all Member States to join us in similar efforts.

On 5 April, Japan hosted in Tokyo the Ministerial Conference on Peace Consolidation and Economic Development of the Western Balkans. Kosovo was one of the most important issues discussed. Many of the participants condemned the recent violence, urged that steps be taken to prevent ethnically-motivated violence and expressed support for the restoration of the security situation by UNMIK and KFOR and for the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan. These remarks were reflected in the Joint Conclusions of the Conference.

For its part, my Government intends to adhere to its commitment to achieving stability and prosperity in South-Eastern Europe, in cooperation with the rest of the international community. It is our firm belief that stabilizing the situation in Kosovo is essential to the stability of the entire region.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Albania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nesho (Albania): Allow me, at the outset, to congratulate you, Sir, on your presidency of the Security Council and to wish you every success.

I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his comprehensive briefing and substantive remarks.

The violent events in Kosovo last month, already strongly condemned by broad international opinion as well as by the Kosovo people and their institutions, indicate that both its democratic process and its future cannot and should not be allowed to be taken hostage by extremists of any side, nor by old nationalistic ideas

or by scenarios that may try to exploit and flourish in destabilized situations.

On the other hand, as clearly defined in Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), in the document on standards and other acts of the Security Council, Kosovo's future lies in the building of a free, multi-ethnic and democratic society in a country that aspires to its place within the European family. The presence and the efforts of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) and KFOR clearly reflect the determination of the international community in that direction.

The Government of Albania reaffirms its appreciation for the work of UNMIK and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Holkeri, and reiterates its continuous support for their mission in Kosovo. Albania commends NATO's quick response in sending additional peacekeepers to Kosovo as a clear indication of its commitment to protect peace and stability in the region.

We have praised, as a correct reaction, the critical analysis of the situation by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Kosovo, as well as the public commitment of the Government and Prime Minister Rexhepi to rebuild the houses and the Orthodox churches damaged during the violence. The Albanian Government has immediately offered its contribution to that endeavour. For Albanians, religious cults are part of our common civilization and our cultural identity, and not symbols of division and hatred.

The Albanian Government believes that the people of Kosovo and their institutions will increase their respectability by helping to bring to justice the perpetrators of the violent events.

We are confident that Kosovo will continue to cooperate closely with the international community, UNMIK in particular, for the implementation of the political process as defined in the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan. Continuation of this process for meeting the standards requires the support and contributions of all communities to help restore confidence and establish a constructive dialogue. A multi-ethnic society in Kosovo can be the product only of a sincere and broad commitment of the entire spectrum of Kosovar society, including minorities.

The accomplishment of the Security Council's objectives for Kosovo and the process ahead demand serious efforts by all the relevant actors, including the international structures there. They all — Kosovars and their Provisional Institutions first and foremost — should cautiously and courageously draw the right lessons from the recent sad events. They should all redouble their efforts for the implementation of the standards, revitalize dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade, and adjust their approaches and strategies to have a more practical impact on the daily lives of all citizens in order to help achieve a clearer perspective and to speed up the fulfilment of the standards.

These accomplishments also require the strengthening of institutional cooperation. We think that transferring greater power to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo will raise their sense of obligation and responsibility for the better functioning of the rule of law, the fight against organized crime and the protection of human rights and minorities.

Albania is concerned by the increasing existence of parallel structures in Kosovo, which impede the establishment of a multi-ethnic society and challenge the work of UNMIK. The March events in Kosovo, of course, are both condemnable and intolerable, but they should be misused neither as a rationale for such parallel structures, or for nationalistic policies, nor as a way of solving internal political problems.

Let me stress, as my final remark, my Government's strong confidence in UNMIK and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Holkeri, and its full support for the policy and process of standards in Kosovo. We share the optimism that this process will successfully move ahead and open the way to the indispensable solution of its final status.

The President: I call on Mr. Guéhenno to respond to comments.

Mr. Guéhenno: Let me first say that we hear the call for a hard look at the action of the international community, and that we are doing that without jumping to conclusions, because it is a complex picture. Certainly, nobody would want to characterize Kosovo just on the basis of the horrible violence of last month.

In the past five years, before last month's violence we had seen the statistics of violent acts steadily declining, which bears witness to the fact that, indeed, many Kosovars were prepared and were beginning to live next to each other. I think, however,

that we must also recognize that this was more coexistence than a really multi-ethnic society, and that coexistence was indeed very fragile, as we could see before the violence in the difficult functioning of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government or the municipalities, where it was hard to have various communities working together.

The issue of organized crime was raised by the Ambassador of the Philippines. Certainly, it compounds the political problems that I have just mentioned. I am not privy to any information or intelligence relative to Al Qaeda, but certainly I know that organized crime — in the more traditional form of smuggling, racketeering, corruption and intimidation — does indeed represent a very serious problem in Kosovo. It is a serious problem also because there are sometimes connections with political activists. I would want to stress to the Council that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) Police is taking very active measures to fight organized crime, although it is a very difficult phenomenon to eradicate.

As to the economy and its sorry state, I would make a link to crime in that regard, because crime is both a cause and a consequence of the lack of progress in the economy. It is a cause because it makes some operations, such as privatization, more difficult. Indeed, we would not want privatization to entrench criminal interests, and so some precautions need to be taken. At the same time, it is certainly a consequence of the sorry state of the economy, because it is easier sometimes to make a living by crime than by legitimate activities. Thus, the progress in the economic situation of Kosovo is a fundamental element of overall progress there. There certainly will be few returns of Kosovo Serbs if there are no jobs for the returnees. There will certainly be little investment from abroad — whether from the Albanian diaspora or from the investment community at large in the world — if there is no sense that there is a vibrant economy in Kosovo. Thus, there is a vicious circle there in the pessimism on the state of the economy in Kosovo.

Let me conclude on the standards. When I was in Kosovo just before the violence erupted, I was struck by some misunderstanding — which I think still exists among many in Kosovo — on the nature of our efforts with respect to the standards. Too many see the standards as some artificial complication which would be imposed by the international community to create some kind of ideal society. I tried to make clear that, for the international community, the standards are certainly not some kind of artificial exercise. They are the indispensable foundation of a stable society in which various communities can live in peace and prosperity without the heavy presence of the Kosovo Force or UNMIK. I think we need to convey that message very strongly. The standards are not there to please the international community; they are there to help the Kosovars achieve the stability and prosperity that they deserve.

The President: There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.